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PETRONILLA

And other Poems

PETRONILLA

And other Poems

RIVINGTONS

LONDON	<i>Waterloo Place</i>
OXFORD	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<i>High Street</i>
CAMBRIDGE	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	<i>Trinity Street</i>

PETRONILLA

And other Poems

By FREDERICK GEORGE LEE

AUTHOR OF "THE KING'S HIGHWAY," "POEMS," ETC.



RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

1869

[*Second Edition*]

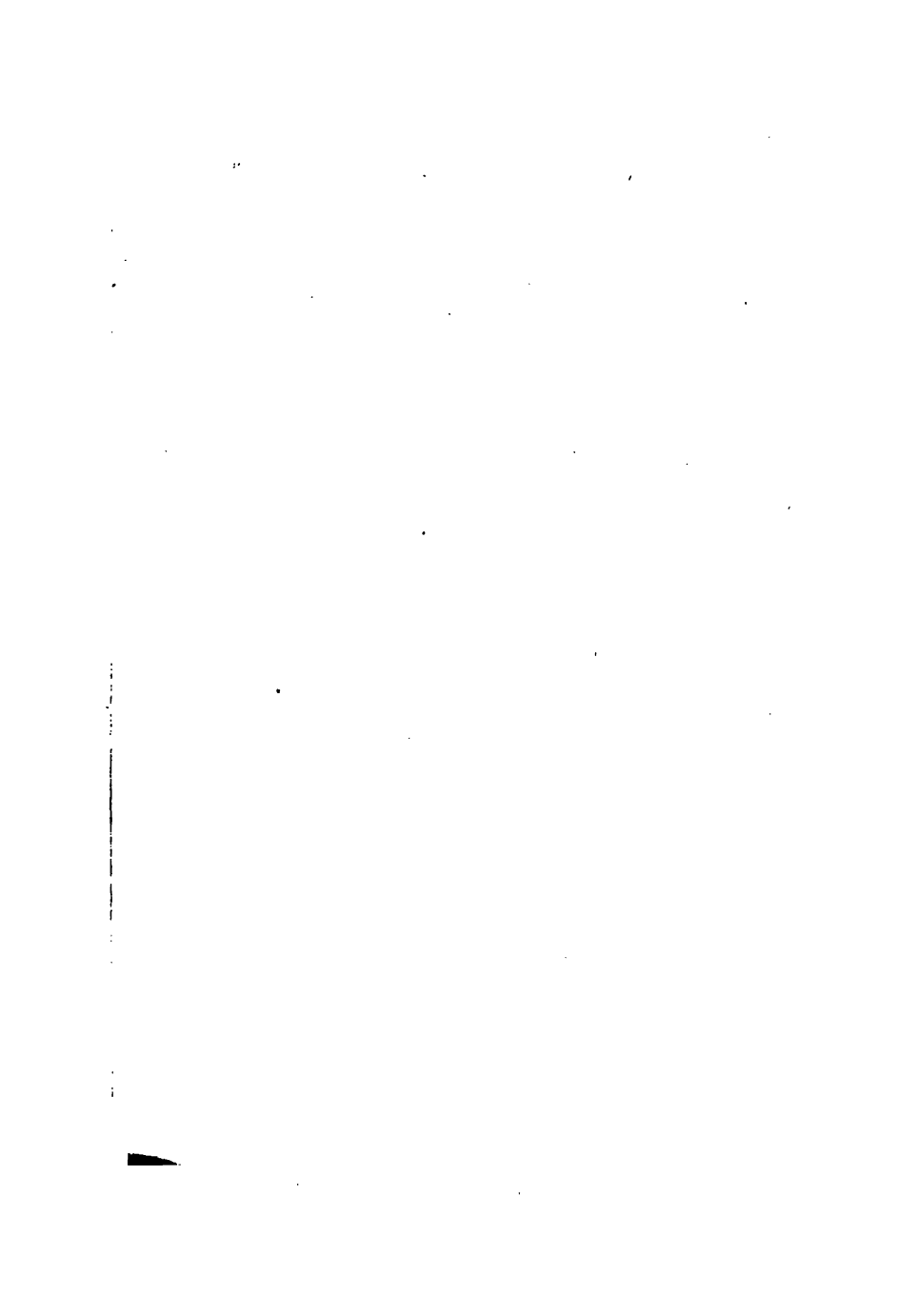
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Prefatory Note

THE first edition of this book, published in 1858, was out of print in 1862. For a volume of verses the edition was not small. Since the latter period its author has been very frequently asked to reprint it. He does so now, with a few corrections and certain additions, including his Oxford Prize Poem; thanking friends both known and unknown, as well as several public critics, for their generous kindness and valued suggestions.

6, LAMBETH TERRACE,
LONDON, S.E., *June* 1869.



TO

The Rev. John Edwards, Jun., M.A.

VICAR OF PRESTBURY

NEAR CHELTENHAM

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MANY PLEASANT DAYS

SPENT TOGETHER AT OXFORD

THE FOLLOWING VERSES

ARE, WITH THE AUTHOR'S VERY SINCERE REGARDS,

MOST AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

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PETRONILLA



Petronilla

I

ONE long Vacation, for three happy weeks
Of brightest eves, I visited in Kent,
With Ambrose Wynyarde at his father's house.
I scarce remember all I did and saw,
We saw so much, and the days quickly flew ;
But the great hall, with broad oak timber beams
And panels of the linen-pattern round,
Is now before me.

Rows, on its lofty walls,
Of dusty tattered flags, antlers and arms :

While at the entrance end, of darkest oak,
A cumbrous gallery and heavy screen.
Upon its front were stars of falchions,
Gauntlets, chain armour, leathern jerkins, spears ;
And quaint old pictures, stiff, grotesque, and grand :
White, flat-faced dames with jewelled stomachers,
One, with six rings upon her forefinger,
And two in dresses most elaborate,
Brocaded silk,—each detail given with care,—
White ground with open gilded pomegranates :
And in the corners stood their coats of arms,
Thin-bodied sprawling lions done in gold. •
There were some knights to match these ladies fair,
Who, if their portraits did not flatter them,
Appeared excessively uncomfortable,
Angular joints with faces brown and brave :
Sir Godfrey bore a long broad-sword of state,
And wore a pointed beard. His grandson nigh

Was decked in ribbons, pendent from his neck,
Long curling hair, with a vacant woman's face,
Made up the picture.

Above the space
Where two dog-irons shone on the chimney floor,
Rose a confused mass of carved black oak :—
Adam and Eve with a leafless tree between.
The Ark and Dove with Noah's turbaned head
Put out of window ; while between and round,
Dragons devouring each with energy ;
Boys, fruit, and wheat-ears, while along the top
Ran this inscription, *Dominus regnavit.*

An oaken table stood adown the hall
So thick and broad and deep, that when our strength
United was put forth to move the thing,
It creaked but stirred not.

A bay window there,
Filled in the head with pictured glass of saints,
Looked out upon the well-sunned, shaven lawn.
Round to the left, at daybreak, cawing rooks
Began their conclave, closed at five o'clock.
I listened to them when the eastern sun
First flushed the loftiest hills, then made the dew
Flash brilliantly like liquid diamonds.

Deep in the country, still the hours flew by,
Joy-sunned and fleet. We strolled about the park
Talking of Oxford and religious "views,"
Sat down to chess, ransacked the library,
Turned over heaps of Venice photographs,
Took ten-mile walks to see the churches round,
Grew tired of fishing, argued politics,
Or read the Laureate under broadening limes.

One afternoon pale, pensive Margaret,
The motherless only daughter of Sir George,
Gave us a manuscript reluctantly ;
Writing most unlike that at ladies' schools.
Her brother read it with his back on the sward,
And a straw boating-hat upon his face
To cheat the sunshine. Bent knee upon knee,
Plucking the grass and flinging it away,
He paused to criticise kindly and with taste.

II

I

OF old when first the Holy Name was known
Upon the Seven Hills, when timidly
The lone and spiritless slave found by it rest,
A Roman daughter learnt the will of God.
A gathered few assembled. One had come
From under eastern skies with joyous words,
Weak in the flesh, but mightily strong in grace,
To draw aside the veil between earth and heaven,
And point to glories unconceived beyond.
His words were powerful, and his flashing eye
Gave them fresh force, so that the listening girl,
With face in her palms, and blue wide-open eyes,

White elbows on a purple covering,
Wondered, was stirred and brushed a tear away.

O desolate world, and weary, weary hearts,
In summer desolate, with plenty poor ;
No point to life, no aim, no end, no prize,
A changeless blank or never-changing gloom.
Powerful his words, he told of Eden's paths,
Where God with man walked in the cool of the day,
And of the Fall, and of the angel sword.
Eve brought in death, but Mary life eterne,
Weak the first Adam, but the Second strong.
The Second mighty in the strength of God.
Factum est Verbum Caro, Light of Light,
There never was an age when Thou wast not,
Begotten before the worlds, yet born in time,
Of Death the Conqueror and of Life the Source.

2

Message of power for weary, weary hearts ;
Angels first sang the canticle of praise,
And man takes up the chorus. Loud and long
It rings out down the ages. Listeners
Marvel awhile, but soon its import learn,
And reverent bow. The king in zone of gold,
The poorest outcast, the most abject slave,
Has heard the song and learnt the Love of God.

3

O blue-eyed one, with restless anxious glance,
Lady patrician gazing vacantly,
Now by the Tiber, now across the sea,
In Olive Garden and on Calvary's Hill,

Or back again before Minerva's fane,
Where art thou now?

Then powerfully he told
Of the glad tidings, clear, dogmatic, true.
He who five thousand souls one Pentecost
Had won to the Church, now gained another soul ;
For Petronilla quailed at Peter's word,
Knelt at his feet and learnt the power of grace.
We know not how nor why. God's will be done.
One shall be taken and the other left.
Now were the world's allurements powerless,
Its blooming pathway barren, desolate.
So too Rome's throng'd courts. The voice of
praise,
The honied words of flattery were harsh,
Yet was her vision never circumscribed.

4

Like some far-stretching landscape from a hill,
The Church below was spread before her gaze.
Powerful, divine, resistless. Distant climes
Heard the clear summons only to obey.
That heavenly song which reached the shepherds'
ears

When Christ was born of Mary, and those words
Which on the Resurrection morn were heard—
“The Lord is risen indeed, and Death is dead”—
Are known and deeply loved. Single souls have
come

And mightiest nations. Upon simple hearts
The sacerdotal character impressed,
Each age has known. The powerful Arm of God
Has ne'er been shortened, so have mighty works

Been wrought below. Martyrs their palms have
won,

And saints their snowy robes and jewelled crowns,
Wanderers soul-weary have returned to Christ,
And blackest hearts become as white as snow.

Gloria in excelsis. Grace is strong.

Come, heavy-laden, enter on your rest.

5

She saw, one starry night, in lustrous dream,
The unending glories of the Church above.
Around the golden-gated City lay
A rich sunned landscape. Hill and vale and wood
In gentle undulation. Brightest tints
Lay over each, gold, emerald, crimson ;
Frosted silver edging all, as moonlight,

When the skies are hid, fringes the tree tops
Of our poor earth below. The breeze around
Was heavily burdened with sweet odours rich,
While from within the City came glad songs,
Rising and falling to the rippling plash
Of the o'erflowing streams of Paradise.
All this was the reward, the lot at last,
Of those who walked by faith and fought the fight.

6

Tell my Lord Antony I am not his.
He ne'er can pillow on my breast his cheek,
The fancied pressure gives me pain. Such joys
Are transient, earthly : shooting-stars of gleams
Of April sunlight. Gaze for a moment

And you see but gloom. We seize such earth-joys
And they are gone, leaving a gaping void.
The pleasure coveted is changeless pain.
Tell my Lord Antony I am not his.

7

God made me for Himself, and I am God's.
In but not of the world, if so His will.
Let Memory clasp not any joy of earth,
Let Faith's keen glance rest on the Home above,
And Hope dwell there where Love shall be at last,
A full fruition—an eternal rest,
The summit flower of grace on God's high hill.

8

As years flew onwards to the eternal hills,
Like wondering eyes first gazing on the sea,
The faithful learnt that one whose soul had shone
Beauteous with grace, was known throughout the
world

As a saint of God. Eastward and westward,
On bright sea-shores of Italy and Spain,
When the morning star clear trembled o'er the
wave,

Or when the purple robe of Even lay
Upon the horizon, 'thwart the western sun,
Fringed with gold lustre ; fishers on the beach,
Knelt round a figure, softly smiling, and
Melodious sang, *Ora pro nobis*

Petronilla : grant us a great success,—
We toil for those we love, in the love of God,—
And bring us safely to the heavenly shores.

III

LIFE is no longer pointless. Higher aims
And holier aspirations. Not the poor
thoughts

So weak and watery which are made girls' own
By mixing with their world, nor the thin talk
Of commonplace profound, nor gossips' words,
But one determined purpose, kind and good.

O pale-faced Margaret, follower of those
Who followed Christ, His blessing be with thee !
The poor and outcast know thee. The young
child,
Timid and loving, looks up in thy face,

And finds a true friend both for body and soul.
Under the sunshine thou art sunning all
With the choice benedictions of the Church ;
And, when the white Moon looketh in at night,
Sees thy two thin, veined hands together placed,
And thy moist eye before a crucifix.
Thou lovest God, and others as thyself,
And thou shalt have exceeding great reward.

When blood-red War raged over eastern lands
One name, unblazoned in the newspapers,
Was known to those who lay parched up with pain,
Under the moonlight. Ministering she walked
From hill to flat, weary but grace-inspired—
Strong in His strength Who came at Pentecost,—
With beating heart and sympathizing soul,
To stanch the wound, to whisper words of hope,

And shed rich blessings over each and all.


Years afterwards, when Change had done his work,
And the big world had moved with steadiness,
I wandered in a church-porch open door ;
Oak benches unobtrusive, all restored,
Where rich and poor together bent the knee ;
Enamel pavement, screen with gold and blue ;
An alabastrine altar, jewelled cross ;
Three rings of tapers in the eastern part,
And windows glowing with rich coloured tints,
Jesus and Mary, Magdalene and John,
And Petronilla, with a little fish,
Daughter in Christ of the great Fisherman.
All these I saw and more.

In one side-aisle,
Looking east, a long, veined form in marble,
Clear, cold, and white, with quiet tranquil smile,

And hands in prayer. One large full lily-bloom,
Lay on her rising breast, while underneath,
In gilded characters, this legend ran :—
*Here lyeth Margaret Wynyarde. In the hope
Of resurrection to eternal life,
She sleeps in peace. Lord Jesus, hear our prayers,
Thy Petronilla was her patron saint.*

IV

NE'ER would I see again old Wynyarde
Court,
The bright home of the friend, whose face and
voice
Will be before me ever till I die.
Alone, my loneliness would be most lone.
Ne'er would I tread again that ancient hall,
Or mark sun-shadows creeping o'er the lawn,
To darken door and roof with gathering gloom.
Father and son have passed from mortal ken,
And sleep their last sleep in the village fane,
In that side-aisle which glows with rich vermeil.
My friend of youth, my friend of college days,
With all that could make music for his soul



And spread his path with flowers ; great troops of
friends,

Perpetual sunshine or blest silver day,
Bade long farewell to home, to friends, to all ;
And yielded up his soul to God Who gave.
Sire followed son within a little week,
To learn the mystery of the unseen world ;
While I live on to see the changes change,
To miss, by day and day, the friend of yore,
To fight Life's battle with a bad success,
To see the little overcome the great,
To note the new aye vanquishing the old,
The vile and low o'ermastering the good,
To mark Decay work out his work divine,
And sorrow deepen for the widening blank
That leaves me lonelier in a lonely world,
A stranger tramping over rugged ways
To seek lost friends of yore, in the end, at home.



OTHER POEMS

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

Under the Hills

I

OLD home, old home, under the quiet hills,—
Ruddy Spring and sunny Summer,
Each in turn a welcome comer ;
Autumn, too, with red and gold,
Over copse and vale and wold,
Ever loved as a peaceful fold
Under the quiet hills.

II

Under the quiet hills,—

Sward of moss and banks of fern,
Wildest woods with never a turn,
Tangled brake and patches of green
Greet us unlooked for, and intervene.
Adown from beneath their craggy top,
Silverly glancing, and never stop
When Winter is past, clear trickling rills,
Where violets cluster and daffodils.
Shadow and sunshine there pass by,
Matching cloud and blue in the changeful
sky,

When the Summer grows old, I dream as I
lie

Under those quiet hills.

III

Under those quiet hills

Seven gables, stony grey,

Stand looking over the vale ;

Hoarding many a sorrowful tale,

And telling a tale always.

Seven gables with oak beneath,

And stone-bound windows small,

Orange lichen upon the wall,

And a quiet around like the presence of Death.

Beeches with silver back look o'er

A sluggish pool from the wall to the door ;

While over the door, with iron-leaves rich,

Crumbles slowly an empty niche :

Carved fragments and wide-grown weed,

Where stood the figure of Etheldrede.

Within, dark panel and stony floor,
Gilded cornice and massy door,
Pictures and armour up on the wall,
And a faded curtain across the hall,
Gathered up into dusty folds below,
And tied with an antique-looking bow :
While beside it stands a broken lance
That once belonged to the king of France,
Who was taken prisoner by the son
Of old Sir Henry of Quarrendon,
Whose shield is a fesse between crescents three,
And his motto "By faith and constancy."
My chest on the casement.

The breeze,

though cool,
Scarcely motions the weedy pool,
Out in the pond there, just as they list,
The dace come up with a sudden twist :

I can't help watching the circles die
Though bright be the garden and blue the
sky

Here the shadows are broad and dun,
While there a lily enjoys the sun ;
Of that flower's death would a painter be
wary,

If painting the mission of Gabriel to Mary.

.

Firm box-hedge by the chapel wall,
Quinces mellowing, sunflowers tall,
And beyond, the rich peaches ready to fall :
Fruit to look at, picture to paint,
But could pencil preserve the rich odours
faint,

Of the old home under the hills?

•

IV

Old home under the hills,—

Full five centuries have past by,
Poor are rich and low are high ;
While the earth has given a timely rest
To thousand thousands upon her breast,
And numberless shadows, early and late,
Have crept across the dial-plate,
Since the slab was raised and the oil was
poured
And this pile was offered to the Lord.
The lights were lit and the chapel named,
And a withering curse on the spoiler proclaimed.
The words of that curse are heard again
When the full moon shines through the window-
pane ;

The sleeping or wakeful those sounds will
reach,

Though none can discover who frames the
speech.

O'er just and sinner, o'er lowly and proud,
It broods like a breaking thunder-cloud ;
Each has known sorrow and keen dismay
From King Henry's time to this present day,
And six generations have passed away
At the old home under the hills.

v

Watching, kneel I day by day,
Friends and seasons pass away,
Lord, be Thou my perfect stay.
This jewelled Rood, with Mary and John,

Is a picture ever to look upon :
Thou art with us, though Thou art gone.
Then, Lord, forgive, and take Thine own,
Let me prepare Thee an altar-throne,
For all is Thine, and Thine alone
Of the old home under the hills.

VI

Old home, true home under the hills,
Ruddy Spring and sunny Summer,
Each in turn a welcome comer ;
Autumn, too, with red and gold,
Over copse and vale and wold,
Still more loved, as a peaceful fold
Under the quiet hills.

Now hangs no dark cloud above,
For the ever-burning lamp of love
 Glisteneth under the hills !
Ever flushing copse and wold,
Deeper tints of purple and gold
 Stream down over the hills !

Alone

I

A LONE, in the noisy restless street ;
Thousands hurrying to and fro
Lonelier make me as I go
Creeping onwards with none to greet.

First far backward a sunnier day
Home-known faces in quiet dells,
Till up-and-down music of chiming bells
Brings me back as they comforting say,
Jesus and Mary were out at night,
When the winds were sharp and the stars were
bright.

II

Then a glimpse of my after-delight,
Heart with heart and hand in hand,
A flood of sunshine over the land,
Autumn rich and Summer bright.

Yet Summer was short and Autumn poor,
Turbid streams and cloudy skies,
Now but darkness round me lies,
No red glare from an open door.
But Jesus and Mary were out at night,
When the winds were sharp and the stars were
bright.

III

No sweet voice or joyous smile,
No kind glance or bosom warm,

Morn and even, calm or storm,
Cold below, and none beguile.

Alone, alone, keen though it be,
The Olive Grove was keener still,
The Nails and Lance, the darkened Hill,
And all alone for love of me.
Jesus and Mary were out at night,
When the winds were sharp and the stars were
bright.

IV

Alone in the desolate, crowded street,
Dipping down with a curve of lights,
Shining silver, glistening sights
Right and left, but none to greet.

Yon church windows, lit up for prayers,
Magdalene Saint though Sinner there ;
Lead me, Lord, her lot to share,
And let me tread the golden stairs.
For Jesus and Mary were out at night,
When the winds were sharp and the stars were
bright.

My Guardian Angel

*Nonne omnes sunt administratorii spiritus in ministerium missi propter
eos qui hereditatem capient salutis?*

KIND Guardian of my youth, still ever tend,
Dear Angel form,
Who soothed my soul and dried my tears, a friend
In calm or storm.

Bright Messenger of God, be near me still,
When sin is strong,
Toward the far-distant land in joy or ill
Guide me along.

Lead me to Him, the Source of every grace,
Sweet Mary's Son,
Let me adore His Wounds and see His Face,
And I have done.

But while I linger here, temptations nigh,
Wean me from earth,
Show me the splendour of God's court on high—
The second birth.

Tell me of that bright land far o'er the hills,
That beauteous lies,—
Of peaceful grove and music-making rills
In Paradise :

Tell of the City of our Lord and God,
That needs no light,
Show me the emerald courts which Thou hast trod,
Where comes no night :—

Tell of the crystal sea, and lamps of fire,
That mystic glow :
Speak of the chants that float round Heaven's
choir,
Unheard below ;

Save that the eye of Faith can sometimes glean
A glimpse of light,
A shadowed glory of that heavenly scene
Now veiled from sight :

Save that at evening's close, or midnight hour,
These notes are heard,
Now loud, now soft, now deep with heavenly
power,
And souls are stirred.

Strange sounds of moving waves and mystic songs,
Come floating by ;

Angelic whispers from the unseen throngs
Are heard and die.

Then tell how Martyrs wave their fadeless palms
Before God's throne,
Teach me the airs you sing — those endless
psalms—
To God alone.

Tell of the Queen of Saints at God's Right Hand*
In golden vest—
Of white-robed virgins crowned that near Her
stand
For ever blest.

Show me the Lamb of God, the Light Divine,

* Astitit Regina a dextris Tuis in vestitu deaurato : circumdata varietate.

Who pleads for all,
If I am His, rich graces will be mine,
I shall not fall.

And when at last God calls me home to Him,
Guardian, be nigh,
Shield me when strength is low and sight is dim,
Then can I die.

The fears will cease, the darkness flee away,
The scales will fall,
Then evermore for me an endless day,
And God, my all in all.

The Lady Mary

A BALLAD

A GREY and desolate homestead,
A blank wall by its side,
A long and level line beyond,
Where the Lady Mary died.

One red rose by the garden gate,
One lily in yonder bed ;
The weeds how thick ! my heart how sick,
And the sun how fierce and red !

It gleams upon the casements,
And falls upon the wall,

It blisters every window-sill,—
It mocks the lonely hall,

Where the Lady Mary walked so fair
When she went to be a bride,
And where she lay on Saint Cuthbert's day,
With tapers at her side.

She went to Our Ladye's Church, they say,
The psalms and prayers were said,
And she vowed to obey her lord alway,
In love, at board and bed.

Seven days from the marriage morn,
Sunshine o'er the bride,
Seven short days had passed away,
And the Lady Mary died.

Nought of the Lady Mary here,
But a picture which doth not lie,
Long golden hair on a kirtle fair,
And a mild and soft blue eye :

Nought of the Lady Mary here,
But a picture in the hall,
Bright at noon when the sun upcreeps
The dial upon the wall.

In yon church sleeping, while above,
With claspt hands on her breast,
Calm looking toward the sun-rise,
In marble. *God give rest :*

Christ, give her rest, let each one pray,
In charity when he goes,
At morning grey to the altar steps
Where the lamplight softly glows.

The bare and desolate homestead
Is more lonely when day is dead,
And the pine-tops are crimsoned by the sun,
That goeth down blood-red.

Dark against the deep blue sky,
Darker where lilies float,
With rank grass round, the waters sleep,
A black and stagnant moat.

A tenantless silent homestead,
The pale moon by its side,
Making silver tints on death-struck pines
Where the Lady Mary died.

Lonely when the sunshine falls,
Or the moon walks up the sky,
Lonely, too, when the stars die out,
And the twilight passeth by.

Let each one, crossing the barren moor,
Say one "Our Father" at least,
That the Lady Mary be made once more
A Bride at a Marriage Feast.

What of the Night?

WHAT of the night? what of the night,
Blue and starry and cold,
Silver mists in the grey twilight
Over the level wold?
Forward and backward, thought on thought,
Others have gazed before,
Souls are precious, though earth is nought,
And bright the golden shore.

What of the night? what of the night?
Pales the radiant moon,

Stars die out in uncertain light,
And morning cometh soon :
Morning dawns and sorrows creep back,
Unrest in the golden ray,
Long is the night, but certain the track
To the everlasting day.

*

D

Fourteen Years Ago

I

BLUE and black transparently,
Out of the glare of the mounted sun,
Now do the waters evenly lie,
And the lank weeds point to the bright blue sky,
With orange in place of dun.
Clear and sharp transparently,
Motionless lie the weeds,
In and out below the dark fish swim
In curve and circle then up to the brim,
Moving the crispy reeds.

II

Shaded I lie
Under the sky,
While the tank of the moat is just hard by ;
The weeds are as thick, and the water as low,
As they were some fourteen years ago.
Look ! the fish will dart off to the rushes thick
When I fling in this paring of alder-stick ;
There they go,
Down below,
I told myself so,
And 'tis just as they did fourteen years ago.

III

Shaded I lie
Under the sky,
Now the sun glares, for the clouds have past by ;

I watch that shadow go over the wold,
Over the wall and across the lane,
To put out the gold in that window-pane :
O'er yonder waggon and barley-load,
And quickly athwart the chalky road.
Field and valley and village green,
Lines of copse to the left of the scene :
Now it darkens the sheep in the distant fold
As I watch it pass slowly across the wold,
To shade the hills of purple and gold.

IV

Never, I ween,
So joyous a scene,
As with Alice and Mary and Geraldine,—
A drooping lid,
A voice sweet and low,

And a laughing eye,—
Who were here by the moat fourteen years ago,
And now are sleeping all in a row,
By the churchyard cross where the sunbeams
glow.

There they lie, and people are wary
Of pressing the earth over Alice and Mary ;
At each grave, careful, they walk between
And the same is done for Geraldine.

God give them eternal rest,
Like John, a place upon Jesu's breast ;
Then a brodered robe and a lily-flower,
And a fillet of Gold for Mary's Bower.
Radiant sunlight, company blest :
God soon grant them eternal rest.

v

Shaded I lie
Under the sky,
With the dark blue water sleeping by.
Gnarled oak-arms, brawny and old,
And bright leaves over me, green and gold,
Making intricate trellis-work where the blue
Of the diamond sky comes peeping through
At the drowsy gnats flocking the air.

vi

Just three times
Must have sounded the chimes,
And another chime has begun.
Clear and bright transparently
Under the glare of the noontide sun

Still do the waters evenly lie,
To image the blue of the cloudless sky,—
Why do I think of eternity,
And why of the death of Time?

“Dolor Meus in Conspectu Meo semper”

(To E. B.)

I

BEHIND the rocks, before the crispy sands,
Where the blue waves come up towards
Nazareth,

Sun-ridged and golden, John and Jesus played.

The sunshine fell in splendour, and the sun—

Misty and dazzling white—was overhead.

A line of brilliance semicircular

Lay round the bay, while brightly far beyond

The city-walls and homes stood boldly out.

Below there bloomed no flowers, but up the rocks
The fairest blossoms hung, from which sweet
scents

Spread and rose upward 'neath the evening star.
Thrice did the elder-born essay to reach
The beauteous clusters, but the cruel rock,
Jagged and keen, bade him no longer strive.

II

So Mary's Son, with smile and loving look,
Would, with a resolute will, gather the flowers.
Below, the sands were barren, bare, and dry.
Steep were the rocks and sharply dangerous.
Yet still He clomb their rugged, stony sides,
Blood starting from His Hands, the dolorous way ;
Anon the clustering blossoms fell, and John,
Gathering them up, enwove a coronal,

And placed it reverent upon Jesus' brow.
Just then, a troop of merry children came
And sang a joyous canticle in His praise ;
Kneeling around, in innocent, childish play,
They called Him King, and kissed His wounded
 Hands,
So were His sorrows ever in His sight.

A Loss

I

THEY have buried her here to-day,
Sink, sun, too joyous and bright,
They have buried her here to-day,
Come, deepening grey twilight,
Stay, lingering grey twilight,
And afterwards come the night.

II

They have buried her here to-day,
Sorrow and darkness for me,
They have buried her here to-day,

*

By the broad and unquiet sea,
By the restless, soothing sea,
In its wild immensity.

III

They have buried her here to-day,
When my burning tears were shed,
They have buried her here to-day,
And my heart grows heavy as lead,
My heart grows heavy as lead,
And my grief is deep for the silent dead.

“Behold thy Mother”

A GOLDEN-haired child, with large blue eyes,
Gathering violets fair :

“Where do you come from, little girl?”

“I am going home out there.”

The chubby hand cannot grasp the flowers,

So they fall on the dusty track ;

The shy one's fears outforce a few tears,

And she looketh taken aback.

“And what prayers do you say, little maid—

Tell me what prayers you say?”

“ ‘Lighten our darkness,’ and ‘Pray God bless,’
And the ‘Our Father’ alway.”

“I put my hands together, like this,
When I go to bed alone,
And I always say what my mother taught,”
Then she said in monotone :

“Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed I lie upon.
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels at my head :
One to sing and one to pray,
And two to carry my soul away ;
And if I die before I wake
I pray to God my soul to take
For Jesus ‘Christ our Saviour’s sake.
Amen.”

“And where is your mother who taught you this,
My good little clever lass?”

“She’s not at home now, for they’ve put her below,
Under the churchyard grass.

“So every day when I’m out at play,
I go and talk to my mother,
And give her some flowers.”

If one is gone,
Methought, you have Another.

Ebening Dews

SONG*

I

SOFTLY night dewes fall,
When the moonbeams quiver,
Flashing o'er the hall,
Dancing o'er the river.
As when snow-storms cease,
Bloom sweet violets vernal,
Toil gives place to peace,
Earthly, then eternal.

* Set to music by W. Borrow : London, Metzler.

Studding Heaven's floor,
 Stars tell in their shining
Of light evermore,
 After day's declining.
Softly night-dews fall,
 When the moonbeams quiver,
Flashing o'er the hall,
 Dancing o'er the river.

II

Wondrous grace descends,
 Like the dewes at even,
Turning foes to friends
 Who throng the stairs of Heaven.
After gloom and tears,
 Breaks the day unending ;
Months, nor days, nor years,

Blessings aye descending.
There, in Paradise,
Rays of splendour falling,
Ceaseless songs arise,
Choir to choir is calling ;
Here, dew falls apace,
When the moonbeams quiver,
There, the source of grace,—
God's o'erflowing River.

“In Tempore Vesperi erit Lux”

A LONG the east are lines of light,
Paling stars in the silent morn,
A pathless way with her silver horn
Takes the moon and wanes the night.

Waiting, waiting, here I lie,
I fear the motion of my breast,
Ever languor, never rest,
Waiting, waiting patiently.

The waves come up to the desolate shore,
Wild and hollow, a shell-like noise,
Never again that smile, that voice,
Till comes the unending evermore.

Spring and Summer, sun and showers
Falling o'er the barren land,
I watch the dry and sparkling sand,
And never know the blooming flowers.

Bare-branched tree, no cloud to pass :
One blue flower between the stones,
One hope that my aching bones
Soon rest under the waving grass.

Waiting, waiting, here I lie,—
Fevered forehead, bosom hot,
Almost black forget-me-not,—
Four long months so patiently.

Five new moons may I never see,
Deeper griefs I cannot bear,
Keener sorrows I could share,
Trustingly, resignedly.

Christ, can pardon be for me?

I am weak but Thou art strong,

Way uncertain, pathway long,—

In the evening light shall be.

.

Brighter glows at eve the west,

Golden, orange, crimson-red,

Death by life and both are dead,

Evening glory, perfect rest!

To Ambrose P. de Lisle, Esq.

Of Garendon Park and Grace Dieu Manor

I

THEY wrong us when they say we plot and
plan,

We frame no schemes, nor look beyond to-day,

We put our trust in God and not in man.

Can it be right to hope and wrong to pray ?

O for that age when Holy Church was One,

Visibly One, and the world wondering gazed ;

But now the scoff of Unbelief is heard,

God's angels grieve, His saints stand all amazed

At man's sad lack of faith. But are there none
Whose inmost souls are with deep sorrow stirred—
Who, when the twilight deepens into day,
When Earth is gilded by the sunny sky,
And when the stars are clustering up on high,
For peace and Unity devoutly pray?

II

Yea, even so, God and the Saints be praised ;
Numberless prayers, like incense rise above,
Not a few pairs of hands are upward raised
To Thee, O Source of Might and Fount of Love.
Those words of Jesus are rich words divine,
That even as He was with His Father One,
So each to each might all the faithful be,
And love the Father as He loved His Son.
Lord, if it be Thy Will—our trust in Thee—

Listen and grant, for every grace is Thine,
Thine to disperse and Thine alike to draw,
So strengthen us to keep Thy perfect law,
Knowing Thy gracious Will, teach us to be
One with each other and so One with Thee.

Earth and Heaven

THE silver lake is sleeping,
 Its rippling waves at rest,
The stars their watches keeping,
 Are mirrored on its breast,
The harvest-moon upcreeping
 Behind the mountain's crest.

The convent-bell is ringing,
 Its chapel windows glare,
While soft unearthly singing
 Floats on the drowsy air :
Towards Heaven the angels winging,
 Those earthly songs upbear.

Years pass—the lake is sleeping,
Years pass—come out the stars,
Those souls that watch were keeping,
Rest within Heaven's bars,
Fled now their pain and weeping,
Healed now their wounds and scars.

Yon rugged mountain hoary,
That harvest-moon that glowed,
How tell they still the story,
And point they out the road !
Hills sunned with golden glory,
And hearts without a load.

True that the end is nearing,
Pale frame and closed eye,
Though winter skies are clearing,
And spring once more is nigh ;

Yet each one death is fearing,
And all must one day die.

At last Heaven's sea is gleaming,
The seven lamps are hung,
The light of God is streaming
O'er race and kind and tongue ;
The sapphire throne is beaming,
And the endless chorus sung.

Our Village and its Story

(To A. P.)

A PLEASANT country, dale and hill and
wood,

Village and homestead round for miles outstretcht.

Below, an old grey gabled manor-house

Half hidden in trees, with a dark stagnant moat,

Whose sluggish waters move not all day long ;

And chapel ruins ivy-buried in elms,

Deep in the valley stand below the copse.

Through yon white rocks where larches crown the
stone :

From distant hills, o'er many an emerald field,
A silver rivulet glancing in the sun,
Now shadowed o'er, now golden, and now lost,
Leaps on the jutting stones, and sparkling falls
With ceaseless splash into a broad clear pool.
Lichens and mosses, bindweed, ferns, and grass,
'Thick fringe its borders and creep up the rock.
At eve, when long dark shadows slanting fall,
Scythe-bearing labourers across the stile,
Village-ward wending, make the spot less drear.
At that wild corner, where o'erarching trees
Make deepening shades, and grass grows coarse
and rank :

Where the toad lives and poisonous fungi thrive
With purple hemlock and the snakeweed dark,
An icy shudder steals the peasant o'er
When the bat flies, and the first star comes out,
Should his step bear him thither.

For of yore,—

The tale is told at nights by a winter's fire,—

A powerful lord, known all the country round

For deeds which make the faithful link his name

With men of Belial, plundered Holy Church.

Chalice and shrine and rich embroidery,

Piles set apart for God, and goodly lands

Became his own : reward for deeds of night

Effected for the king. But as of old—

When the strange Hand out-traced upon the wall,

At Babel's impious feast, a doom of woe

As punishment for sacrilege,—God's Arm

In retribution was uplifted there.

'Twas Autumn time, one breathless sultry eve,

A leaden sky and fleecy drifting clouds

Told of a gathering storm . . . fearful and dire

The thunder echoed loud. A withering flash,—

Righteous, O Lord, art Thou, Thy judgments
true,—

Left him a stricken bloodless festering corpse.
All saw God's Finger, and no human arm
Bare him to burial, so for many a year
His bones lay whitening in the long rank grass.

This tale is handed down from sire to son,
And all receive the moral it conveys.
Much faith exists here still. This spot was ne'er
Cursed with those importations from abroad
Three centuries ago ; and later still
The folk scarce knew when Laud lay down his
life

In bold defence of lasting changeless truths,
And Charles was killed by rebels. In this place
We never had the Puritans—thank God !
Ten miles 'cross country at the Minchenford,

A troop of scoundrels rode into the Church,
Destroyed some niches rich with images ;
Baptized their horses at the Norman font,
Smashed every window—left the priest half dead,
Quoted some Scripture texts, then rode away
To do the same kind offices elsewhere,
But never crossed our parish boundary.

.

To the left, through oak and beech, a broad bright
road


Leads to the olden Church and ancient cross.
Here a high-gabled house, with low-roofed sheds,
And half a score of huge round ricks behind.
There a long string of white-washed cottages
With ridge irregular, now dark, now gold ;
And there the village green, where four roads
meet,
The sign-post and the stocks ; and, far beyond,

This little brook, through orchard, field, and moor,
Marked out by willow-trees, grows deep and
broad.

On still, through yon wide valley thick with leaf,
Its course is visible. By tower and spire
And farm,—by lordly hall and hamlet lone,
Then in a dim dark wood its path is lost.
Far over vale and moor and copse-clothed hill,
And blushing cornfields, ripe with golden grain,
Bold mountains rise, grey with an autumn mist,
Shaded by cloud, or purpled by the sun :
And over all rich tints, while gleams of light
Make indistinct the landscape, far and near.

Give me such village scenes. I hate your town—
Your quiet town where all talk politics,
Oppose the church-rate and abuse the Pope ;

Of schisms full and maiden scandal-mongers.
Where, at the dinner-hour of plain poor folks,
Tract-hawking women—begging weekly pence
To fatten some sleek scoundrel Ireland-ways,
Who blights a soul with half a bowl of soup,
Making a hypocrite or infidel,
And does the devil's work,—go simpering round.
And cities like not me. The busy crowd
Elbow and jostle all green country-folk,
That one is glad to get back to the fields,
Ten miles from any town, without a coach,
From any railway station three hours' drive.
Give me such village spots. Evil is here, I know,
But less than there. Your modern ways
And nineteenth-century improvements all
Are not attractive here. Dissenting souls,—
Who stand to the Faith as Pharaoh, Egypt's
King,



Once stood to Israel,—don't bless us here.
We've no such pile as Zion preaching-house,
So Faith's not quite extinct. In this respect
We're better off than most small country towns.
And though we don't possess an Institute,
Where tradesmen's boys discuss the newspaper,
And any subject of philosophy,
Science, theology, or politics,
We're none the worse for that. They learn, not
teach,
In this our village, as folks did of old
When David Wilkie's pencil was at work,—
An anxious gathering to hear the news.
Only put Inkermann for Waterloo,
Raglan for Duke, and Russian foe for French,
And then the change appears no change at all.

In Memoriam

THE air was warm, the young leaves still,
The eastern heaven was pale,

A braid of sunshine girt the west,

A star hung o'er the vale.

Ring out, yon solemn bell, ring out,

O'er wold and valley far,—

Ring out, a soul absolved has fled

Beyond the evening star,

Another soul is called away

To God's dread judgment-bar.

A kindred soul left those it loved,

When a long-past year grew old,

And dull November's breath had changed
 To brown the fields of gold.
His dust awaits the angel call,
 Beneath an altar stair ;
Christ give eternal rest at last
 And a meeting in the air,
A flashing glimpse of the sapphire street,
 And then a meeting there.

So now on the cold, cold earth below,
 We three are all alone,
To us May-blossoms tell of death,
 And Autumn of pleasures flown.
Yet strange year-voices, speak ye on,
 How dull is Memory say,—
How cold is Love, how weak is Faith,
 And bid us ever pray

That we each may know the strong Right Hand,
At the awful judgment-day.

And now sweet Spring is here again,
And sunshine robes the hill ;
Once more the solemn bell rings out,
Then all around is still.
Before the Cross let prayers ascend,
Granted through Him Who lies
On the bright altar-throne above,
A perpetual sacrifice.
Lord, give eternal rest to each,
And a home in Paradise :
At last may we see Thy Face and sing
The chant that never dies.

The old Vicarage

I REMEMBER, in the warm sunlight,
Knee-deep in the browning hay,
The quaint old Vicarage-house that stood
By the side of the public way.
On its many gables broad trees flung
Their shadows black and grey.

A narrow world was all I knew,
Joys crowding, hopes and fears,
Life seemed an endless spring-time then,
With April shower-like tears,

But sorrows have come, all spectre-like,
With the shorter deepening years.

I remember the hall and entrance,
Each nook, each flower and tree,
The roses by the garden gate,
The cowslips on the lea,
The golden sunlight on the grass,
And the river bright and free.

It was the spring-tide of our life,
But now those hours have past,
And Autumn's colours have been here
And Winter's biting blast :
It is no more a home for us now,
But there will be a home at last.

I remember the pictures on the wall,
And the oaken roof so low,

The semicircle round the fire,
And the embers' crimson glow,
The Christmas gathering seems a fact,
Though things are altered so.

That home is now a home no more,
Another home more fair
Hears voices new within its door,
Strange footsteps on the stair ;
Some trees are dead, and some have grown,
For Change runs riot there.

The only things that have not changed
Are the river sparkling by,
The golden sunlight on the grass,
The stars in the deep blue sky,
And the noble church-tower, grey and broad,
That riseth proudly by.

Death has wrought a cruel work,
A certain reckoning stands,
Come a quiet for the soul
In Paradisal lands,
Then spring eternal, unconceived,
A House not made with hands.

A Garden in Autumn

THICKLY the dew lies on leaf and mead,
The lily droops its head,
The wild clematis sheddeth its seed,
And the woodbine flowers are dead.
Beside those graves the grass grows long,
Silvered with Autumn's breath,
Yon golden copse has no sound now,
And all things tell of Death :—
Death, though the snow-drops bloom
Or glares the sultry sun,
Fix'd is man's changeless doom—
His race soon run.

The dry leaves in the gravel-walk,
And the winds that bear them away,
In their hollow mysterious Autumn talk
Mutter of death and decay ;
Deep chimes out-knell from the ivied tower
Saying one more day is dead :
Pale grows the elm and sere the bower
And the oak-tree a deeper red :
Awhile the roses bloom
When southern swallows fly,
Autumn tells of the tomb,
Says " All men die."

Little Nell with a book in a dusky room
Looks up to nod as we meet,
The bright sparks deepen my autumn gloom,
For they light up a vacant seat.
No joys below could one grief beguile,

The sorrow one May-morn gave
To us a last glance at her loving smile—
To our mother a churchyard grave.
Resting beneath the grass
Upon Earth's tranquil breast,
Cloud and sunshine pass,
Sunshine give and rest.

There's one fair spot with beauty rife,
A garden where four streams meet,
One, the celestial River of Life,
Ever flows through a golden street,
No decay nor changes are there,
No twilight nor starlight nor moon,
But fadeless blossoms perfume the air
Through an endless summer noon ;
Here, Autumn and Winter are ours,
And here a loved one dies,

O for the joyous bowers
Of Paradise.

Still thick lies the dew on the mead,
Still droops the lily its head,
Still the clematis sheds its seed,
And the woodbine flowers lie dead.
Over the graves still the grass grows long,
Silvered with Autumn's breath,
Still from the yew-tree no requiem-song,
Though all things tell of death.
Autumnly such is of sight,
But the streams by all may be known,
Faith pierces the shadows of Night
And sees the White Throne.

On the Death of the First Bishop
of Grahamstown

MAY 16, 1856

F EARLESS thou wentest, nerved with strength
from God,

To plant the standard of the cross on high,
To tell how He Who formed the earth and sky
Was born of Mary, and on earth once trod :
Of Gabriel's message, and of Bethlehem's star,
Of Calvary's Rock, and of rich Joseph's grave :
Of Him Who reigns above Heaven's golden bar,
And ever pleads His Wounds mankind to save.

And now thou art no more : thy voice is still,
Thy hand to bless shall ne'er again be raised—
Thy course is done. If thou hast done His Will
Who gave thee special gifts, His Name be praised.
Lord, bestow peace, now his brief conflict o'er,
His soul soon reach Heaven's bright and golden
shore.

The Conversion of Constantine

DOWN the northern highways tramping,
From dark forests, broad and hoar,
From the fastness, from the valley,
From the inland, from the shore,
Sweep the hordes of wild barbarians,
With a war-cry shrill and long ;
Sacking Rome for sake of plunder,
Is the burden of their song.
They are gathered, where o'er levels
Purple shadows, darkening, lie,
And the swampy flats are silvered
When the moon creeps up the sky.

Cruel woes that need avenging,
Wrongs so deep of hearth and home,
Fill the broad breasts of these Northmen
At the Citadel of Rome.

When across the Tuscan mountains,
Broke the morn in saffron hue,
He who wore the golden fillet
Saw their tent-heads in the dew :
Far as strain'd eye could wander,
O'er the plain and down the vale,
Horde on horde he marked them swarming,
And his lip and cheek grew pale.
Never from the days of Remus,
Never since these walls were planned,
Had such savage tribes of Northmen
Thus o'errun this favoured land.

Who can help? for help is lacking ;
 "Rome is conquered," cowards prate ;
Weak and worn the trembling cohorts
 Cower within the northern gate.

Yet the purple-robéd ruler,
 When his present strait was sore,
Gathered up the threads of Memory :
 For a vision strange of yore
Seemed to come, when one star trembled
 O'er the Tiber's yellow wave,
One in snowy robe and girdle,
 Guide Divine to seek and save.
Yea, the Love and Light of Christians,
 When that star began to pale,
Stood in majesty before him,
 With a word that could not fail,

“Pray, in faith, that light may glimmer,
Ask that strength, too, may descend,
So the Christian's Lord and Saviour
Shall become to thee a friend.”

Rose the sun in giant splendour,
Cloudless glared the diamond sky,
* Morning dews no longer silvered
All the levels far and nigh :
Golden showers of light, now lustrous,
Tinted flowers upon the sod,
When a fervent prayer ascended
To the great white throne of God.
And at once that prayer was answered,
Doubts for ever cleared away,
Night of error, hour of darkness,
Fled before the Star of Day.

Though the Sign of man's Redemption
Makes the eyes that see it dim,
"In this Sign alone thou conquerest ;
Thou shalt triumph, too, in Him."

And the Word that never faileth
Failed not, as the Word had said,
For His sign was o'er the legions,
And their enemies lay dead.
As the mist before the sunlight,
In some lone and shady dell,
As the leaves in sad November,
So the Northmen fled or fell.
When the banner was uplifted,
Then came strife and wild dismay,
And the tramp of routed legions
Died not with the close of day.

Broken ranks of foes, fear-stricken,
When the evening shades grew long,
While around the Cross triumphant
Rose the Christian soldiers' song.

Victory o'er the powers of darkness,
Conquest of the empire old,
Past the cruel age of iron,
Come the heavenly age of gold :
Empires fade, and wane the kingdoms,
Systems rise, and wax, and fall ;
But the Cross of Christ still triumphs,
And our God is Lord of all.

Slowly fall the snow-flakes

SLOWLY fall the snow-flakes,
Clothing Earth in white,
Sweetly bells are chiming,
On this Christmas night.
Dark the earth aforetime,
White on Christmas morn ;
Christ the curse reversing,
Mary's Son is born.

Slowly fall the snow-flakes,
Virgin-white the sod ;
In the chill descending,
Like the grace of God.

Wild the varied chimings,
One tale only tell ;—
Lies in Bethlehem's manger
Great Emmanuel.

Slowly fall the snow-flakes,
Hang the holly high,
Bright its berries greeting
God incarnate nigh ;
Dark the earth no longer,
Barren nevermore,
Grace-flowers spring to blossom
On the Eternal shore.

The Author of "The Christian Year"

I

July 14, 1833

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare
himself for the battle?"

THE night was black, and but few stars were
bright,

The chill of death hung o'er a rocky steep;
Around our citadel men slept their sleep,
While the foe gathered for a deadly fight.
Then rose a clear calm voice, sweet as of yore;
Sounded a trumpet for the sleeping hosts,

Who, rising, staggered to their proper posts,
And grasped their arms, with watchword as before
Behind the city's towers, when morning broke,
The torn flag floated in its silver glare,
The old cross gleaming in the morning air
Of future triumph to our soldiers spoke ;
Sword, breast-plate, helmet, each to other given,
Were blessed by Michael through the bars
Heaven.

II

March 29, 1866

"Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord : and let perpetual light
shine upon him."

A change unken'd has overspread this land,
A Breath Divine has breathed new life again,
The whitened bones, upon a desolate plain

Re-clothed once more, show forth God's mighty
Hand.

Slowly the work of restoration grows ;
Strangely the wills of men He moulds anew ;
Nourishing rain, keen winds, autumnal dew,
Stern Winter's frost or Autumn's golden glows
Succeed—to bring forth Earth's all beauteous flowers.
And he is called home, when the Spring is here,
When Holy Grayle is feasted, and so dear
The Cross' deepening Way—when Grace in showers
Descends. All peace divine be his for aye,
Waiting the noontide of a perfect Day !

Christe Sanctorum decus Angelorum

FROM THE LATIN

O F Holy Angels, Christ, Thou art the glory ;
Saviour, Redeemer of the human race ;
Give us with them to know the heavenly story,—
With Thee a place.

Angel of Peace, may Michael aye defend us,
Bringing sweet peace divine for home and hearth ;
Dispelling fearful war, in mercy send us
A peaceful path.

Angel of Strength, let Gabriel hither speeding,
Far from our courts the old foe drive away ;

While, as of yore, Thy suppliants' voices heading,
Grant, when we pray.

Angel of Health, may Raphael stand beside us,
To heal our sick and faint who weary roam ;
When ways are devious, blessed Angel, guide us
Safe to our home.

Mother of God, Queen of the peaceful legions
Who hymn the light and love of Christ their
King ;
Get us such help that we, in these chill regions,
That song may sing.

Saints, angels, men, combine that this be granted,
Father and Son and Holy Ghost adore,
Whose praises, by angelic hosts be chanted
For evermore. Amen.

The Word was made Flesh

I

DARKNESS upon the highways of the world
Fell darkly, as long years grew old and
died.

Watching the glimmer over sandy flats,
Its white line broken by the jagged rocks,
To fade and darken under starless skies,
Man, with hopes stricken, raised his palms in prayer
Cried for the Day-spring, and for God the Light,
Feeling his bitter loneliness and woe.

II

He saw the frail form of his child of love,
Where darkness spread, grow frailer and more frail

Give place to grey he marked the glow of health,
The soft eye lose its sparkling light of life,
And Death impress his signet of decay—
The curse of “earth to earth” all potent still,
His grasp so firm and true. With outstretched
 hands
Man cried to God the High for succour, love.

III

Years slow or swift passed on. Yet overhead
Deep darkness brooded. Man had cast out God,
And the Great God withdrew from all His Own,
And left man to himself—how deep this curse !
Left him to wander where the sands were rude ;
The streams oft dry, and dews of night so dark ;
To stumble in a strange and desert land,
And only dream of breaking-day and peace.

IV

Some preached a time when, over treeless flats
The white line (broken by the jagged rocks),
All fringed with silver, should grow golden-broad,
And flood the wilderness with crimson rays,—
A time when God the Maker, man the made,
Should be for ever linked in love ; and when
Bright rings of angels, in His home of homes,
Should haste to guide lost wanderers on their way.

V

Kings had desired to see that day of joy,
But only days of woe came to their lot :
Kings in their slumber, least unquiet here,
Dreamt of a garden, where four rivers flowed,

And God had once Him walked : whereof old the
foe,

In form of beauty, and by lie on lie

Poisoned a race. Near where a pledge was given—
“The woman’s Seed shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

VI

Years slow or swift passed on. From nigh God’s
throne,

One of the four in might, with snowy alb

And vest of ministrant in heavenly choirs,

Came to a daughter of our fallen race,

Predestined in the counsels of our King

To be the Mother-maid immaculate,

(Grace an immunity, by grace alone,)

And said, “The Lord is with thee, Mary, hail !”


VII

From midnight in the Spring, when lily-flowers
Gave out their fragrance to the watching stars,
To midnight when the Winter snows lay deep,
But few short months. And then the Spring-time
rose.

Down the steep stairs of Heaven white angels came
With songs of praise and joy for desolate hearts,
"Peace on the earth : to men of peace good-will,
And glory, glory to our God on high."

VIII

O'er hills and valleys where the snow lay thick
Came shepherds, who had watched their flocks by
night,



To where the rosy Child of Bethlehem lay ;
To where His Mother Mary held Him forth
For lowliest adoration : and to where
The ox and ass with silent gaze of awe
Knew Him, the Son of God and Son of Man,
Without Whom nought was made that has been
made.

IX

Darkness still o'er the highways of the world,
Dark years aye falling and dark deeds still done,
A wilderness to traverse, and the way
Still long, home distant, failing friends and loss.
Yet now a light—the Light of Light—below.
O Lord of life, true Man, have mercy, Christ,
Behind we would leave this darkness, tread a path
Which leads us to our home of light and peace.

X

So, as the night comes round when Christ was born,
How fresh and new His graces for us each !
When all is still as death o'er wold and weald,
The cattle kneel in awe of Mary's Son,
And tintured pane of thousand village choirs
Shoots out its bright gleams o'er the sparkling snow ;
While Mary's sons, those consecrate to bless,
As Mary did, show forth the Lord of Life
Amid the starry lights, with joyous song,
For men and angels lowlily to adore.

Strangers and Pilgrims

HOW dull the night and weary,
The path so strange and long,
No guide to show the trackway—
No sound of sigh nor song.
The distant, purple mountains
Looked nearer than they are,
Ere twilight's shadows folded them
And hid the Evening Star.

And now yon streamlet's ripple,
The sough of distant vale,
The solemn plaint of night-bird,
The heart's unwritten tale,

All tell the same old story,
No peace for man within ;
Without, but woe augmenting,
For Sorrow trippeth Sin.

O rest receding ever,
O Night that grows not old,
Only when morning breaketh
Across a peaceful fold,
Shall lost friends be united,
Their tears all wiped away—
No loss nor separation
In Christ's unclouded day.

Songs shall ring out and deepen,—
I seem to hear them rise—

From rings of white-stoled angels,
Where the Lamb worshipped lies.
Heaven's joys are joys we know not,
Such visions bright all new,
Life's mysteries unravelled,
And Earth's veil piercèd through.

God speed the day eternal,
Bestow its rest secure ;
Man longs for peace supernal
Where pleasures all endure :
O for the Face of Jesus,
And for His Mother's love ;—
Of rest a full fruition
In that true home above.

Veni Sancte Spiritus

FROM THE LATIN

COME, Source of Light and Spirit of Love,
From Heaven's bright sapphire throne
above
Let undimmed radiance dart ;
Come, Thou Father of the poor,
Rich benedictions that endure
Diffuse through every heart.

For Thou'rt of all consolers best,
Cheering oft the troubled breast,
So let us know Thy Peace ;

Rest give us for our toiling feet,
Glad coolness in the burning heat,—
 Bid our keen anguish cease.

O true, undying, glorious Light,
The faithful with Thy Spirit bright
 Replenish Thou and fill ;
Without Thy radiance divine
Nought in the heart of man can shine,
 And good becometh ill.

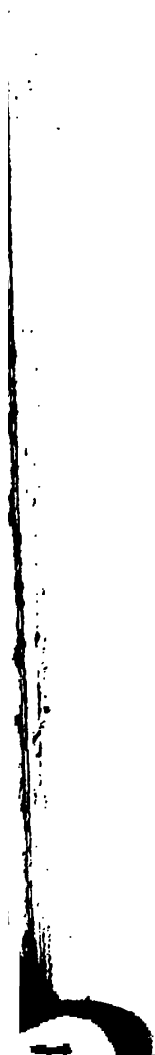
Bind up each wound, our powers renew,
Shed o'er us Thy refreshing dew,
 And wash our sins away ;
Bend Thou the proud and carnal will,
Melt Thou the frozen, warm the chill,
 And guide those going astray.

On all who love Thee and adore
In humble trust for evermore,
Thy sevenfold gifts shower down ;
Give consolation at the last,
Eternal life when death is past,
And then—a fadeless crown.

THE MARTYRS OF VIENNE
AND LYONS

A PRIZE POEM, RECITED IN THE THEATRE,

OXFORD, JUNE 28, 1854



The Martyrs of Vienne and Lyons

“ Martyrum velut aquilæ juvenus renovabitur ; floreant
sicut lilium in civitate Domini.”

QUIVERING his golden shafts, the Sun
reposed
On clouds of purple. Slowly from the East,
Mantled in sable garb,—upon her brow
A silver crescent caught the sun’s last gleam,—
Evening came up ; while stars and planets bright,
Like scattered jasmine flowers upon a stream,
Were clustering in the dark blue vault of Heaven.

Below, the Rhone went flashing on his way,
Through tall banks, perfumed with the breath of
 flowers;

While dews of Evening hung a lustrous veil
O'er sun-tipt hills, like radiant gleams of light
That shed their halo round a sainted face.

And onwards still wound tortuous silver veins
Through rich green valleys, resonant at Morn
With notes of praise from birds of brightest hue
That quivered in the sunshine, as they hung
Beneath a sky,—one molten mass of gold !
Through valleys gay, at Noontide musical
With happy song from light and joyous hearts
That willing toiled in vineyards, rich with fruit,
Bright as the gardens of Hesperides.
Through valleys lone, when Evening's silent step
Fell on the earth ; and now the nightingale

Sang out a plaint of clear and pensive tone,
Which, save the ripple of the swelling wave,
And the soft chiming of the vesper-bell,
Together blent in chords of harmony,
Was all the sound that met the listening ear.

But now 'twas Night,— calm, solemn, silent
Night ;
The moon, unearthly pale, went up the sky
Like a soul disenthralled from earth's embrace
Returning to its God. An awful calm
Was o'er the scene. Chalice'd 'mid hoary hills,
A lake of blue, girded with silver line,
Mirrored the moon upon its tranquil breast,
With stars attendant,—angel-choristers
Around Heaven's great white Throne. Her softened
ray

Made every tower and spire of fair Vienne
Appear a frosted ornament of light,—
A beauteous city of another world !

And here, amid this Paradisal scene,
Methought a slumber stole my senses o'er,
And I fell tranced in ecstasy. The breeze,
Softer than low lute stealing o'er a lake,
Made music not of earth.

One diamond star,
Brighter and brighter in Heaven's azure dome,
Appeared a jewel on an angel's brow,
Whose gold-fringed pinions, dyed with rainbow
hues,
Cleaving the soft breeze of the midnight hour,
Were folded near. Divinely fair his face,

Such as a poet's dream alone can know,
Or an old painter's pencil could depict,—
And flashed with beams of brilliance from above.

By some mysterious influence I passed,
With rushing tumult in my fiery brain,
Swiftly through intermediate range of space,
And stood o'ershadowed by the olden town.
In calm repose it lay. The streets seemed broad :
One side was moonlit and the other black,
And no voice broke the awful silence round.
Heaven's guardian visitant, with noiseless step,
Led me through ways where towering spires,
cross-crowned,
Shot up, like crocus-leaves through crystal snow ;
While clearest tones of harmony divine,
Soft as the murmurs of the evening breeze
Through some sweet harp, fell on my raptured ear :

“Peace to the souls of all who sleep in Christ,
Whether o’ershadowed by the churchyard tower,
Or by the ocean’s ever-changing waves ;
And peace to those who, when the Church’s step,
Pacing unwearied down the track of Time,
Had traversed scarce two little centuries,
Laid down their lives with Stephen and wit
 James,
As living witnesses in God’s behalf.
Seest thou yon spire, with moonbeams silvere
 o’er,
Piercing the azure sky? Below, repose
The ashes of the martyr Attala ;
Above whose tomb one never-ceasing song,
How he became a witness to the faith,
Exultant echoes through the solemn aisles !”

And now methought he ceased, and on we passed
By Pilate's tomb,—he who had doomed to death
The Lord of Heaven Who hung the stars in space,
And bade them circling whirl till Time should end :
By Pilate's tomb,—whose soul, for ever gnawed,
Prometheus-like, by Memory's poisoned fangs,
I saw enchained within the bars of Hell.

At which a thrill, as lightning, through me
passed,—

Dim was my sight, my senses petrified,
And my parched tongue refused its offices,—
The mind alone could frame an orison.
The angel, like a mortal, seemed to sigh,
And fell a tear transparent.

Onwards then
To where a jagged wall, moss-grown and black,

Rose darkling in the cold moon's snowy beams.
And here a vision of the infant Church
Slowly unfolds before my tranced sight,
Life not more tangible.

Tier upon tier,
Within a spacious amphitheatre
Uprising slantly to the sky above,
Ten thousand forms gathered within its walls,
With murmurs hoarse, like winds in leafless woods,
Borne round from lip to lip, rose to the sky :—
“ Long live Aurelius, lord of lords, and king !”
Then, like the calm which, at the Saviour's word,
Levelled the billows of Gennesareth,
A sudden silence overspread the scene,
As tones of lute and cithara arose ;

While every eye, with strained and eager gaze,
Fell on a portal.

Slowly through its doors
A sad procession wound across the sand ;
There was the aged sire, with hoary beard,
Grown old as messenger of God the Word,
To lands where Darkness spread her shadowy
wing,
And Sin, with easy rule, was king supreme :
There, too, the virgin fair, whose tearful eye
Glanced, quick as thought, around the circling
rings,
And fell in fear : and he who ministered
At God's Own altar, when the faithful met
For Prayer, and Hymn, and Eucharistic rite.

Was gazing dauntless on the eager crowd,
While faltering words to Jesus moved his lips,
And clasping to his heart the Saviour's sign,
Lowly he bowed, making God's will his own.

Greetings tumultuous, bounding upwards, rose,
Praises to gods, and curses doubly deep
On all the servants of the Nazarene.
Still, here and there, a woman's head would turn,
And taper fingers brush away a tear ;
Or in youth's soul, passion and sympathy
Beget desire, and feelings kin to love
Excite to save the virgin from her doom
And claim her as his own.

But there was none—
Save He who watches o'er the meanest slave

As o'er the mightiest monarch—to look down,
And soothe His servants in that fearful hour.

The cruel rack, the slow-devouring flame,
The brazen plates, glowing with fiery heat,
Severed the tie that knit the flesh and soul ;
While angels, hovering o'er that awful scene,
Sang lauds triumphant, as each martyred form,
One after another, each inspiring each,
With Death's dark imprint fell upon the sands.

One lingered still. The savage rack in vain
Had almost torn Blandina limb from limb ;
The circling fire in vain had wreathed her form ;
Heroic still, and fortified from Heaven,
Her tongue refused her Saviour to deny.

At which, malicious murmurs, rising round,
Deepened to frantic shouts to Jupiter,
To hurl annihilating lightning-darts
On stubborn Christians, and erase their name
From Memory's tablet, as the boisterous sea
Washes a sand-wreath from its golden shore.

Quivering, she stood erect, seeming to pray
That Death's dark shade might overshadow her ;
And seraphs waft her weary soul to God.
Then angel-forms, leaving their courts on high,
Came down at His behest to strengthen her,
And on their rainbow-pinions bear her soul ;
For life, like tide-waves, now slow ebbd away,
And her glazed eyes must soon be closed in death.

She stood, half-leaning, by a fire-charred stake ;

Heavenward her deep-blue eye. The soldier-band
Fled the arena, and their star-tipt spears
Were clustering round another low dark door :
A silence such as mortals seldom know
Was over all. The shouts had died away,
And each could only hear his beating heart.

With demon-glaring eye, and ruffled mane,
Three tawny lions, bounding o'er the sands,
With silent step, and ready fang displayed,
Half leap upon the Virgin's mangled form.
With inward growl suppress, sudden as thought
They halt. Their fiery-flashing eyes grow dim,
And they stand motionless.

Quick as o'er face
Of some calm lake a windy ruffle sweeps,

So, on the features of those thousands round
Pale Fear his impress leaves.

The Son of God,
Guardian of those who owned not Babel's power,
Walked in the furnace, and its fury cooled :
And when His faithful captive seer was cast
By impious King to lions, shut their mouths
And stayed their hunger, that they harmed him not :
So now, at His command, an angel bright
Their power makes powerless ; and they crouch in
fear

Upon the sands, before that helpless form.
The ranks around—e'en as a sudden storm
Upon a summer's eve—hurl murmurs forth
Wild and discordant ; while the soldiers, mailed,
With cruel spear, dye her pale breast in blood.

Then holy angels bear her soul to God.
All jubilant with praise, anthemnal sounds
Echo throughout the jasper courts above,
And, bounding Heaven's wall, swell like a wave,
Circling and circling to an emerald shore.

Then, as the panorama glided past,
Dark scenes of horror came. An aged priest
Endured fierce torments, such as man alone
Could ne'er devise,—dark schemes, brought forth
in hell,
And fondly nurtured in this world of sin.
There, pure as crystal waters, rippling forth
From some untrodden mountain's hoary steep,
A virgin bore acutest agony,
And her soul went to rest in Paradise.

So to the end. But still methought the Church,
In power divine and majesty supreme,
Walked forth through lands, and nations heard Her
 voice,
Owning Her sway.

 Then, signed with Jesu's sign,
Ten thousand forms flocked to Her lowly ranks,—
Kings, nobles, poets, princes, senators,
Swelling Her triumph, as She walked erect
Across the desert of this sinful world ;
And upward tuneful rose through starry space
Her songs of praise to God. The courts of Heaven
Swelled with the anthem, and the white-robed choirs,
Tuning their harps in unison, sang forth—
Back-echoing sweetly to the Church on earth—
Unceasing praises to the Crucified.

Onward, upon the margin of Time's stream,
Gazing, She saw the empires of the earth—
Dynasties old—fall, like rock-fragments hurled
Into the mighty chaos of the past.
Firm as eternal mountains still She stood,
Gazing serenely o'er the troubled world.
Her footstep moved, while broader grew her ranks,
Even as a river widening to the sea.
Kings bowed before Her, and Her altars bright
Shone with rich jewels, as the ocean-waves
Gleam with a thousand glistening gems at night ;
Her shrines was circled round with costly stones,
Sapphire and pearl, and violet amethyst.
Looms of the East, and cedars from the North,
Balm from the forests, incense from the groves,
And sweet flowers clustering on the breast of
Earth,
Adorned the temples of the Saviour's Bride.

Her silver voice, resounding o'er the waves,
Westward and southward, called the nations
 home ;

And they, responding, owned Her Queen until
Climes that on Earth's far edge courted the sun,
Welcomed Her saving step, and echoing sent
Eternal alleluias up to God.

 The spirit-armies of black-bannered Sin
Harassed Her borders as She passed along ;
And still the World, owing Her sway divine,
Would, here and there, grow weary of Her rule ;
And then the Martyrs won a branch of palm ;
The Virgins, lily-wreaths and crowns of gold ;
And the Confessors, Heaven's bright starry
 thrones !

Then slumbering souls methought, in weird
repose,
Within the flowery groves of Paradise,
Hearing the ripples of the Stream of Life,
And distant harpings round the eternal Throne,
Seeing bright gleams that flashed through golden
bars,
Outcried, in tones of sweetest agony,—
“Lord, good and merciful, how long? how long?”

•



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